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ABSTRACT

Since 1975 the Contoocook Valley District, a small rural cooperative school district in southwestern New Hampshire, has developed a performance-based student competency program which has resulted in a dramatic increase in scores on the Stanford Achievement Test. The district is comprised of 9 towns, covers an area of almost 300 square miles, and enrolls approximately 2,000 students in 8 elementary, 2 middle, and 1 high school. Desire to become an excellent school district prompted the establishment of voluntary staff committees, who used a "results planning" format to find a set of essential competencies basic to coping in society. Once terminal skills for graduates were identified, those skills were tracked linearly back to prerequisite skills at lower grade levels. The initial committees and subsequent coordinating committees developed and implemented the essential competency areas (communication, computation, personal economics, health, citizenship, and planning) and continue to monitor the instructional program, to identify areas needing work, and to initiate teacher training activities which address the areas of concern. Implementation was done gradually at all three levels--4th grade (1979), 8th grade (1980), high school (1981)--and will be completed with the senior class of 1985. Examples of competencies and test score summaries are included. (BRR)

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FROM THE MIDDLE TO THE TOP OF THE HEAP!

EXCELLENCE IN RURAL EDUCATION



A PAPER PRESENTED

BY

JOHN C. CARR, D. Ed.

at the

NINTH NATIONAL/
SECOND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
ON
SOCIAL WORK
IN RURAL AREAS
AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
AT ORONO

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FROM THE MIDDLE TO THE TOP OF THE HEAP!
EXCELLENCE IN RURAL EDUCATION

This presentation will describe, in detail, the development of a performance based student competency program by a small rural cooperative school district. The result of this, a dramatic increase in scores on the Stanford Achievement Test, will be shared.

The session will involve four distinct parts. First, I shall describe the competency program as it currently functions. Next, I shall present the history of the program from 1975 to date, including the impetus for its development. Then, and this is not for the faint hearted, you will have an opportunity to take a math computation test required of eighth grade students. Lastly, I shall discuss the way in which the competency program has been incorporated into the district curriculum, and expectations for the future.

DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT AND COMPETENCY PROGRAM

The Contoocook Valley District is comprised of nine towns in southwestern New Hampshire covering an area of almost three hundred square miles. The student enrollment is approximately 2,000. There are eight elementary, two middle and one high school.

The booklet entitled "Essential Competencies of the Contoocook Valley School District" describes the competencies in detail, and is available from the district at Route 202, North Peterborough, NH 03458. For the moment, however, I shall use the overhead projector to display an example of essential student outcomes (Figure #1). This list of required eighth grade competencies has been revised recently and is, therefore, slightly different from the list in the book.

Figure #1

Eighth Grade Competencies

- COMM 1.RCOM Reading
2.F/OP Fact and opinion
3.WDIR Written directions
4.WRIT Paragraph
5.BULT Business letter
6.LCOM Listening
7.ODIR Oral directions
8.OPRE Oral participation
9.TSMI Telephone
- COMP 1.ONUM Reading numbers
2.WNUM Writing numbers
3.4BAO Adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing facts
4.MULM Multiplication
5.DIVM Division
6.4OPF Fractions
7.4OPD Decimals
8.COFD Converting fractions and decimals
9.RAFD Rank ordering fractions and decimals
10.CO/T Elapsed time
11.MEAS Linear measure
12.PEQU Perimeter
13.AREA Area
14.CONM Converting units of measure
15.CONT Converting units of time
16.B/LG Bar and line graph
17.DTAB Distance table
- R/IN 1.INFO Using information
2.OUTL Outlining
- PECO 1.UNIP Unit costs
2.C/GI Budgeting
3.DEPS Bank: Deposit slip
4.WDRA Bank: Withdrawal slip
5.TAX Tax-supported services
6.FORM School registration form
7.CONC Reading packaging
- CIZN 1.CLAW Community laws
2.TNST Local and state leaders
3.4/RT Constitutional rights
4.BALT Voting
5.DIRB Compass points - 8
6.MAPL Map legend and scale
- HEAL 1.PREV Diseases
2.EMER Emergencies
3.BODY Body systems
4.EDSS Drugs, alcohol, smoking, stress
5.BSKL Body control; motor skills
6.NUTR Nutrition
7.DLAW Drug and alcohol laws
8.CONR Consumer responsibilities

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Insert Figure #1 - List of Competencies

You can observe from Figure #1 that student performance is measured in the areas of communication, computation, personal economics, health, citizenship, and planning. The topic, resources and information, has been included as part of communication. The hows and whys of this list will be answered later in the presentation. The four letter leads are computer identification codes.

Before proceeding it is important to list the major tenets of the school board policy relating to essential competencies. They are one of the key reasons for the success of the program.

1. Successful completion of performance based tests is a requirement of promotion from fourth to fifth grade, eighth to ninth grade, and graduation.
2. Helping children to master the skills required to pass the tests is the responsibility of the classroom teacher—indeed of all teachers.
3. Children who demonstrate observable deficits based on early year testing are given individual remediation plans. It is the responsibility of the school principal to have the plans written and monitored.
4. Most students with identified handicapping conditions are required to pass the competency tests. There is a process whereby waivers of specific items may be granted.
5. Transfer students are expected to pass the tests. No diploma will be given until the tests are completed.
6. Testing results are not used to evaluate teachers.

7. Not official policy, but an important procedural point: students are allowed multiple opportunities to pass the tests. There are three regularly scheduled testing periods for fourth and eighth grade students. High school students have two opportunities during tenth grade, two during eleventh, and three during twelfth.

HISTORY

A review of the last nine years demonstrates how the processes of communication and system development have been critical to the success of the project.

In 1975, I was principal of the northern unit of the Conval School District. This five-town unit is comprised of six small schools, five elementary and one middle. While district wide scores on the 1973 edition of the Stanford Achievement Test were in the average range nationally, i.e. mostly fourth or fifth stanine (and some schools had high scores, eighth and ninth stanine), in some northern unit schools the children tended to score slightly below the national average. This was true particularly in the middle school years.

For us, in New Hampshire, those scores were o.k. (I might add parenthetically, that New Hampshire has the lowest percentage of state financial support for education in the country. Approximately 90% of the cost of education is raised by the local property tax.) In New Hampshire, ours was thought of as a "good" school district. We wanted to keep that reputation as a good, better yet, excellent, school district. But we wanted to be able to verify and document that reputation. Before doing this, however, we needed to define for ourselves what it means to be an excellent school district.

The process involved in defining an excellent school district began with the question: If our school district were functioning ideally, how would we know it? A "results planning" format, developed by the Center for Constructive Change in Durham, New Hampshire, was employed. Staff members were trained in results planning.

Voluntary staff committees were formed in 1976 and 1977. Through the leadership of William Page, who was then Superintendent, these committees wrestled with questions such as "If our graduates had the skills necessary to function in the world beyond high school, what would we see happening?" or "How would we know it?" The groups were searching to find a set of essential competencies basic to coping in our society. When skills for graduates had been identified, the committees asked themselves "If this activity, for example, writing a perfect extended paragraph, is required of twelfth grade graduates, what in the same skill area should be required of eighth grade students?" In other words, we backed off linearly from terminal skills to prerequisite ones at lower grade levels.

As one might guess, it took not only time but patience and tact to arrive at consensus on the specific indicators of competence which would be used. Results planning gave structure to the process. It helped people keep in mind the overriding goal and thus minimized "nit-picking" which can frustrate even the best intentioned committees.

The following beliefs were fundamental to the process:

1. A few well chosen well-developed activities could incorporate many of the skills which were considered to be essential.
2. When the staff had accurate information on student performance, there would be a rapid improvement in the effectiveness of the school district.

3. The competency program would not be equated with EDUCATION. It was a piece of the total educational program. (We did not want our instructional program to be distorted into repetitious efforts at competency attainment.)

The skills generated tended to fall into the categories previously displayed. A conscious decision had been made not to try and relate competencies to any existing curriculum. In all candor, this was due in part to the fact that we did not have much in the way of formal district wide curricula. With nine independent towns, democracy if not anarchy had prevailed to this point in time.

In 1976, because so many committees were working independently of each other, the need for coordination became apparent.

The superintendent gave the task to a group called the Joint Educational Council (JEC). The responsibility of this group was, and continues to be, advising the superintendent in all matters relating to instruction. In relation to competencies, the group's charge is:

1. To review and recommend for adoption to the School Board, each initial component of the student assessment system including: a district statement of essential competencies, indicators for each competency area, and an overall evaluation design for each competency area.
2. To act in conjunction with the superintendent to screen and recommend persons to fill staff assessment positions.
3. To review staff concerns and recommend revisions to improve the student assessment system.

4. To see that an annual composite picture of district level student performance is prepared and presented to the School Board.

Quite a charge. Figure #2 depicts the system of interrelationships which was developed to enhance communication and understanding within the district.

Insert Figure #2 Committees of the Conval District

The JEC is composed of twelve members of the Conval Teachers' Association, three members of the Administrators' Organization, three members of the School Board, two high school students, two community members, and the superintendent. Quick addition reveals that the teachers, voting as a block, would have a majority on any vote. I have never known this to happen.

In practice, the JEC assesses the instructional program and identifies areas which need work. It then recommends to the Staff Development Committee (SDC) that they initiate teacher training activities which address the areas of concern.

The SDC has a composition similar to the JEC and is responsible for monitoring teacher recertification plans and staff advancement on the salary schedule. It has a budget to allow staff members, at full or partial district cost, to take college courses, workshops, etc. The SDC is also charged with identifying, planning and offering in-service activities to meet staff needs.

As I mentioned, one of the JEC's responsibilities in relation to the competency program is to review staff concerns and recommend revisions. A case in point occurred when many children were experiencing difficulty with the writing competency. JEC referred the problem to Staff Development, saying,

There are two forms of decision making systems in the Contoocook Valley School District. The daily operation of schools is carried out through a traditional administrative line-staff hierarchy Figure A. The second is a participatory process used for long-range planning, policy recommending, and improvement of the District. Figure B. Both systems place the Board in the position of making ultimate policy. The use of two systems for appropriate decisions is common in industry but difficult for a person familiar only with hierarchy to understand.

FIGURE A

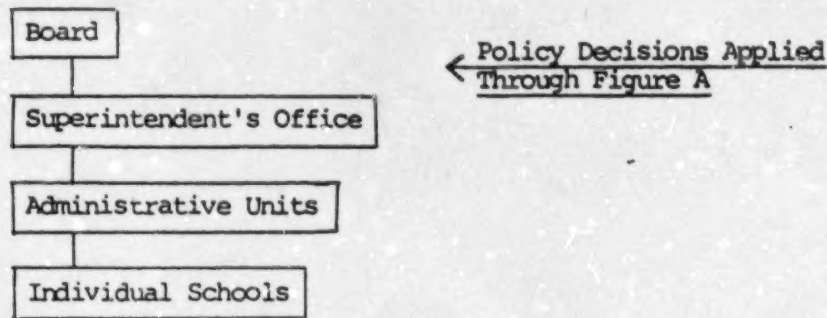
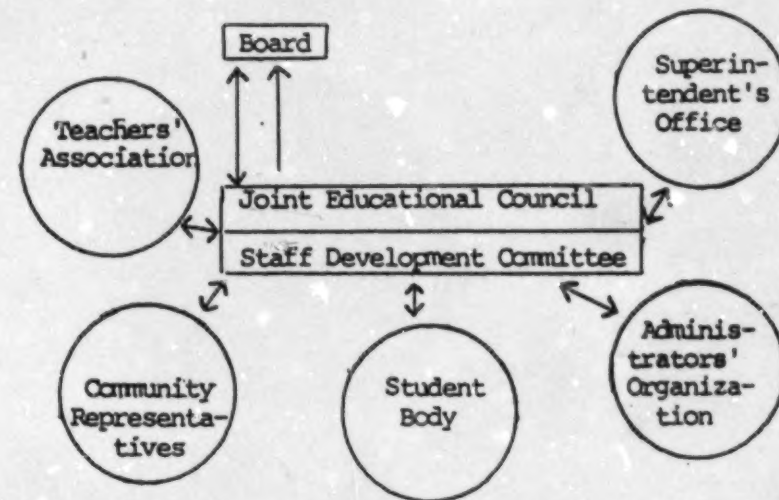


FIGURE B



The use of two systems is intended to couple the efficiency of a hierarchy with the commitment and motivation of participatory democracy. The Joint Educational Council and Staff Development Committee are parity groups (one person one vote without regard to role). The administrators' organization is a parity group within the hierarchy designed to gain maximum consistency in developing and applying administrative policy (budgets, discipline, personnel, and instructional).

"Let's help our teachers to write better, and help them learn how to improve the writing skills of children." Staff Development sent willing staff to summer workshops, most notably at the University of New Hampshire and the Exeter Writing Project. These teachers returned and formed writing groups among their peers and students. As a result, the quality of student writing has improved greatly.

Earlier in the competency program, indeed while we were pilot testing the assessment instruments, it was discovered that 98% of the fourth grade children could not subtract with proficiency. Staff Development sponsored workshops in a drill technique called Precision Teaching. Subsequent fourth grade students have not exhibited the same problem.

What you pay attention to makes the difference. The concept that education should be all things to all people is one which we as educators must reject.

We realized in 1976, that no matter how willing people were to work at these tasks, it was unrealistic to think we could progress much further without full time help. In 1977, the Competency Assessment Team or Compass was established. Originally, two teachers were released from teaching and charged with the following tasks: (the charge is paraphrased here)

1. To determine the level of student performance in specified essential competency areas at the levels of completion of primary, middle and high school.
2. In conjunction with the Joint Educational Council to upgrade the student assessment system through revision.
3. To coordinate the completion of competency indicators and evaluation devices for each competency area in cooperation with faculty committees and the JEC.

4. To prepare in cooperation with the JEC a means for recording and reporting on student performance.
5. To establish a timeline for reporting student performance results to the staff and district.

As the Superintendent said, "The foundation of any student assessment program is and will continue to be the day to day evaluations and feedback to students by the classroom teacher." The Competency Assessment Team "will give the classroom teacher more reliable tools for assisting students to improve their performance in the essential skill areas."

The initial task of the Competency Assessment Team was to condense the essential student outcomes, developed in 1976 and 1977 by the staff committees, into performance indicators. In order to validate the tests, the competency team made trips to the Educational Testing Service in New Jersey. They collected baseline information, determined cutting scores, etc. Once the competency team determined the appropriate level of difficulty for the tests at the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade levels, their job was to validate the tests.

The Joint Educational Council recommended a gradual implementation process. This recommendation was approved by the school board. I, in turn, make this recommendation to you; for, based on our experience, a change of this magnitude should indeed be gradual.

Insert Figure #3 Phase in Schedule

As you can see from Figure #3, in 1979, the fourth grade tests were limited to computation and communication. In 1980, fourth graders had, as well, citizenship and resources and information. Then, in 1981, personal economics and health were added. The program was inaugurated in 1979 at

Figure #3
ESSENTIAL COMPETENCY IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Primary School Class of ...	'79	'80	'81 and after
Competency Areas Required	COMM (P) COMP (P)	COMM (P) COMP (P) CIZN (P) R/IN (P)	COMM (P) COMP (P) CIZN (P) R/IN (P) PECO (P) HEAL (P)*

Middle School Class of ...	'80	'81	'82 and after
Competency Areas Required	COMM (M) COMP (M)	COMM (M) COMP (M) CIZN (M) R/IN (M)	COMM (M) COMP (M) CIZN (M) R/IN (M) PECO (M) HEAL (M)

High School Class of ...	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85 and after
Competency Areas Required	COMM (M,HS) COMP (M,HS) CPLN (HS)	COMM (M,HS) COMP (M,HS) CPLN (HS) CIZN (M,HS) R/IN (M)	COMM (M,HS) COMP (M,HS) CPLN (HS) CIZN (M,HS) R/IN (M) PECO (HS)	COMM (HS) COMP (HS) CPLN (HS) CIZN (M,HS) R/IN (M) PECO (HS) HEAL (HS)	COMM (HS) COMP (HS) CPLN (HS) CIZN (HS) PECO (HS) HEAL (HS)

Competency Areas

CIZN - Citizenship
COMM - Communication
COMP - Computation
CPLN - Career Planning
HEAL - Health
PECO - Personal Economics
R/IN - Resources/Information

Levels

(P) - Primary
(M) - Middle
(HS) - High School

* "Identifies natural resources from which common products are produced" will be tested in 1982 for the first time.

1/12/81

fourth grade level, 1980 with eighth grade, and 1981 with high school. The full implementation process will not be complete until the senior class of 1985. The reasons for this are obvious. We wanted to insure that the curriculum was adequate to prepare students for the required tasks. 1978 was spent collecting information about student performance, perfecting the instruments, informing staff, children, and parents what was going to happen during the '78-'79 school year. 1979 was the year. It had been determined that anyone who did not pass all of the tests by the end of fourth grade would not go to fifth grade. In pilot tests with the '77-'78 fourth graders, no one passed every test. In some ways, that was understandable. Several skills, such as dialing an emergency telephone number, had not been taught. In other areas, such as computing with proficiency, only two percent subtracted competently; this did not augur well for 1979.

We decided to speak to the parents in the district to inform them of the competencies. Nineteen evening sessions were scheduled during the months of September and October; the goal was to meet at least one parent of each child in the district. A booklet entitled "The Essential Competency Booklet of the Conval School District" had been prepared. That booklet could be used by parents to help their children. We didn't reach one hundred percent of the parents. We did, however, speak face to face with eighty-two percent of them, and phoned the others.

Needless to say, in the fall of 1978, the fourth grade teachers were experiencing a great deal of anxiety and doubt about their ability to help children achieve the indicated outcomes. To support them, staff meetings were held in each school. Persons who had been titled "remedial reading teachers" were now called "competency specialists" and were expected to help in all areas, not just reading.

In October of 1978, all fourth grade teachers, along with some elementary administrators, the competency assessment team, and two secretaries, met for a day. They prepared material to monitor a child's progress in relation to desired outcomes. Much sharing took place. By the end of the day, packets were duplicated and distributed to each teacher. These were not the competency tests. Teachers were now, however, able to identify where each child was in relation to where he had to be in June in order to be promoted to fifth grade. Predictions were made as to how many children would pass each subtest during the initial testing session in January of 1979. The predictions were accurate.

Children who passed a subtest in January did not have to take that portion again. Therefore, the number of tests that the child had to take decreased following each testing period.

One of my sons was in the fourth grade at that time. He came home with a tear in his eye after having taken a battery of competency tests. "Dad, I think I'm going to be in fourth grade for a long time," he said. I said, "Why?"

He said, "Because they give us three minutes to look up three names in a phone book, and I can't even find one of them."

I got out the phone book and asked him to look up the name William Page. He turned to the W's. I said, "Dave, last name, last name."

He replied, "Oh, last name, now maybe I'll be able to do it." This is a skill he had been taught, but had not retained. Though simply rectified, it was quite confusing and upsetting for him in the meantime.

In June, the results showed that 92% of the children had passed all twenty-two items. Of the remaining eight percent, some were given waivers due to specific handicapping conditions which precluded their ability

to pass an item or items. The rest were retained--four children. What difference did it all make? Well, if the competencies had been identified as essential for all children to know entering fifth grade, then the fifth grade teachers would not have to do as much remedial work as they had previously. This was confirmed. It was also thought that to the extent that our competencies measured skills appropriate to entering fifth grade, and to the extent that the Stanford Achievement Test had identified national achievement norms for fifth grade, perhaps the group of "competent" fifth graders would score better as a group than their older peers had done.

The 1980 Stanford Achievement Test scores did indeed show marked improvement at fifth grade level. In fact, as figure #4 indicates, the 1979-80 fifth grade as a group, achieved ninth stanine scores in all subtests as well as the total battery. When I first saw the scores, I thought the testing company had made a mistake. After telephoning them, however, I found the scores to be accurate.

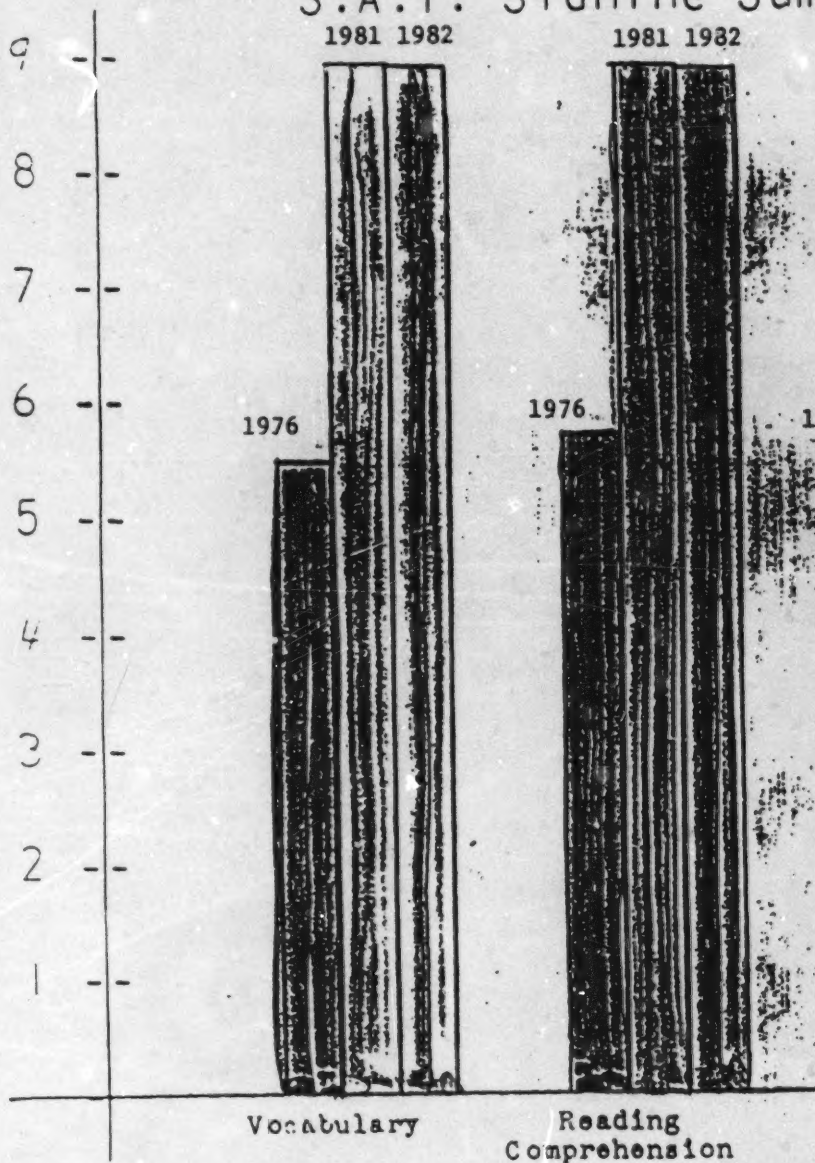
Insert Figure #4 1975-76 1980-81 1981-82

Insert Figure #5 AMS 75-76 Grade Six 81-82 Grade Six

The greatest difference in recorded group scores shows a comparison of the sixth grade at Antrim Middle School in 1975-76 with the 81-82 sixth grade. As you can see from Figure #5, the total battery score in 1975-76 was at the third stanine, while the total battery score of the 1981-82 group was at the ninth stanine.

Most important for me as an educator is confirmation of my belief that for people to feel good about themselves they need to know they are being productive and effective. Stanford scores are significant to us as professionals, but to the children it was very important to know they had the

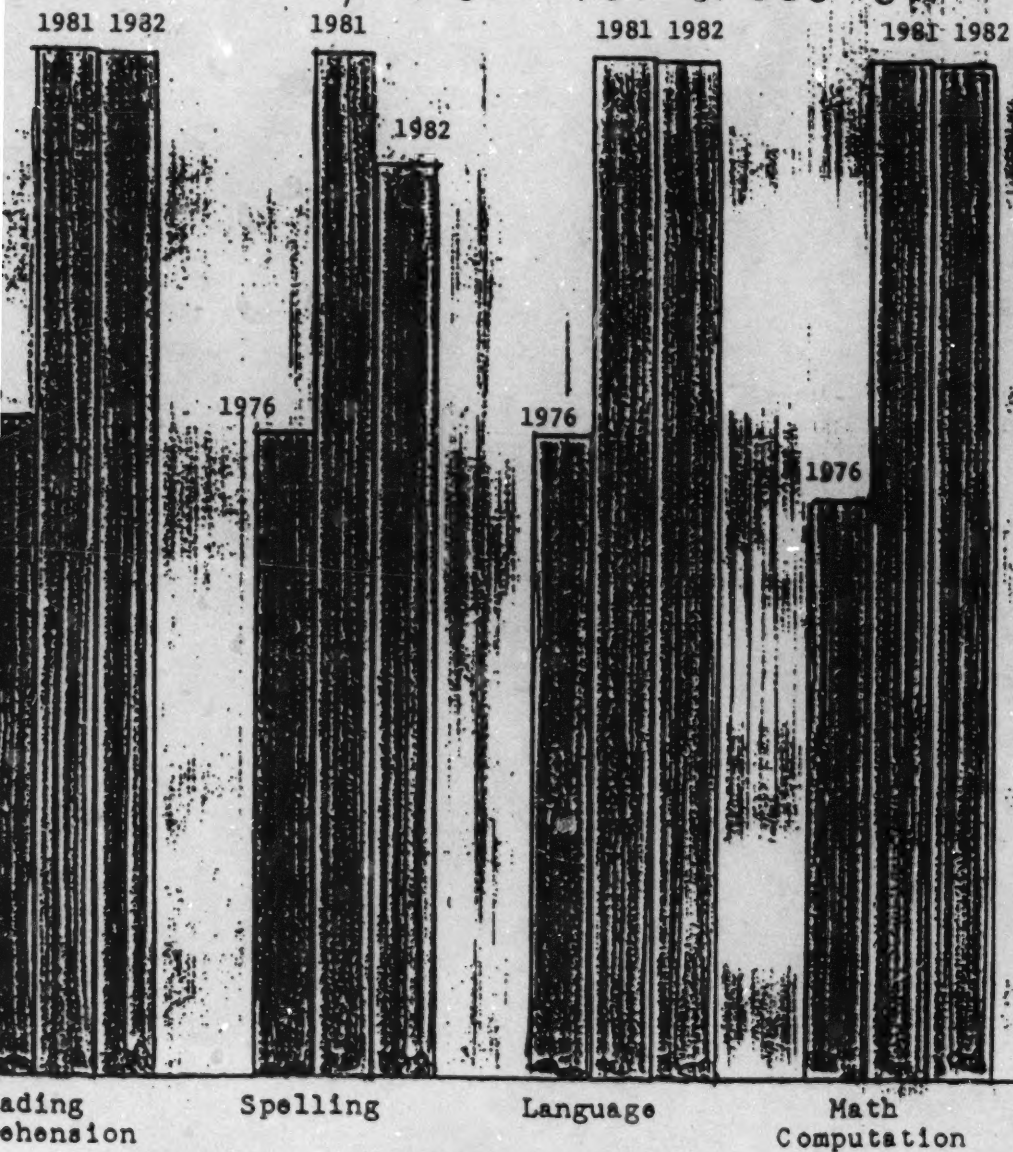
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Figure #4

Summary - Con Val Grade 5



ANTRIM MIDDLE SCHOOL - Grade 6
Stanford Achievement Test
Stanines & Grade Equivalents

1976**1982**

<u>Stan.</u>	<u>Grade</u>		<u>Stan.</u>	<u>Grade</u>
4	6.0	Vocabulary	9	8.4
4	5.9	Reading Comp.	9	8.7
4	5.8	Math Concepts	9	7.9
3	5.5	Math Computation	9	8.0
4	6.0	Math Applic.	9	7.8
2	5.5	Spelling	9	7.5
4	5.7	Language	9	9.0
4	5.9	Social Science	9	8.4
2	5.5	Science	9	8.3
4	5.6	Word Study Sk.	9	8.3
6	6.3	Listening Comp.	9	9.1
4	5.8	Total Reading	9	8.6
3	5.8	Total Math.	9	8.0
5	6.0	Total Auditory	9	8.4
3	5.7	Total Battery	9	8.3

skills that everyone had to have in order to move from primary to middle school or middle to high school. Some of them were achieving at skill levels none of us thought possible. Even some handicapped children who could have received waivers, worked until they passed each of the required competency tests. This group of children knew they could read, write and compute, and all of them had met the same standard.

EIGHTH GRADE COMPUTATION TEST

FOUR BASIC OPERATIONS

I shall now allow you the opportunity to pass an eighth grade computation test. Look at Figure #6. Insert Figure #6 - 4 Basic Operations. This particular test was chosen for its brevity. It is one of the few timed tasks in the competency program. In order to pass this test, an eighth grade student must be able to write thirty-six correct answers within one minute.

No "skipping" of items is permitted, but incorrect answers are not penalized. The objective, therefore, for you intrepid souls, is to try to write thirty-six correct answers in one minute. (Test is attached.)

COMPETENCIES AS THE CORNERSTONE

OF LARGER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

It would be easy for one to get the impression, when attending a workshop on a competency accountability program, that the program represents the total educational effort of the school district. Indeed, you might think that all we do is checklist children through the competency program. Such thoughts are far from the actual educational experience which children receive in the Conval district.

Figure #6
Middle
COMPUTATION

3. 48A0 Timed math facts

STOP. DO NOT DO THIS TEST. WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS. DO NOT SKIP
OVER THE PAGE ONLY DOING EASY EXAMPLES. MOVE ACROSS THE ROWS.

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \overline{)6} \\ \underline{x9} \\ \underline{+4} \\ \underline{-2} \\ \underline{x3} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 7 \overline{)49} \\ \underline{-3} \\ \underline{+4} \\ \underline{x4} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 4 \overline{)36} \\ \underline{+0} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \overline{+2} \\ \underline{-4} \\ \underline{x6} \\ \underline{+8} \\ \underline{+7} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3 \overline{)21} \\ \underline{6 \overline{)30}} \\ \underline{x6} \\ \underline{9 \overline{)63}} \\ \underline{-8} \\ \underline{x9} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \overline{)55} \\ \underline{+2} \\ \underline{x6} \\ \underline{x8} \\ \underline{x5} \\ \underline{x4} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 1 \overline{)3} \\ \underline{-7} \\ \underline{x4} \\ \underline{9 \overline{)81}} \\ \underline{x5} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \overline{)16} \\ \underline{-1} \\ \underline{4 \overline{)36}} \\ \underline{x2} \\ \underline{7 \overline{)49}} \\ \underline{9 \overline{)27}} \\ \underline{-3} \\ \underline{8 \overline{)32}} \\ \underline{x8} \\ \underline{+0} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 10 \overline{+6} \\ \underline{8 \overline{)56}} \\ \underline{-6} \\ \underline{8 \overline{+9}} \\ \underline{7 \overline{)42}} \\ \underline{x7} \\ \underline{-6} \\ \underline{-9} \\ \underline{9 \overline{)36}} \\ \underline{+3} \\ \underline{10 \overline{-5}} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 6 \overline{-5} \\ \underline{3 \overline{)18}} \\ \underline{-3} \\ \underline{2 \overline{)12}} \\ \underline{x7} \\ \underline{x4} \\ \underline{-4} \\ \underline{+8} \\ \underline{x3} \\ \underline{+8} \\ \underline{-3} \\ \underline{x3} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 10 \overline{-5} \\ \underline{x1} \\ \underline{+2} \\ \underline{x8} \\ \underline{-6} \\ \underline{x3} \\ \underline{-1} \\ \underline{7 \overline{)63}} \\ \underline{2 \overline{)8}} \\ \underline{8 \overline{)64}} \\ \underline{+9} \end{array}$$

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We have utilized the outcomes at the three checkpoints, fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades, as places from which to back plan. Performance indicators for intermediate grades have subsequently been determined so that teachers at each grade between fourth and eighth can know what progress is expected for children at their grade level. Children are not required to pass all of the intermediate checkpoints in order to be promoted, but the list does help relieve the burden of the eighth grade teachers, as well as providing impetus for early intervention.

Each area of curriculum currently being developed embraces the competency program, but only as a piece of the total curriculum. For example, a review of the District's New Hampshire social studies guide for teachers indicates where various competency requirements are addressed.

Before being able to take algebra a child must pass all of the eighth grade math competencies, even if the child is taking algebra as a seventh grade student.

The competency program has helped us come closer together and begin to function as a school district instead of many separate schools.

While the competency program is alive and well, many other programs have been researched and implemented within the last few years. A partial list follows:

An elementary gifted and talented program which busses the children to a central location one day per week.

Working with business leaders to learn by solving real problems. Studying the efficacy of replacing or repairing one of the middle schools is an example of a recently completed sixth, seventh and eighth grade project.

Establishing advanced placement courses in biology and math at high school.

Establishing a math program for extremely capable middle school youngsters.

Creating a computer literacy curriculum.

Implementing developmental readiness and learning style placement at the elementary level.

All of the above and others, are examples of progress toward providing an excellent educational opportunity to the children of the nine towns in the Contoocook Valley of New Hampshire. The competency assessment program is a critical component, and in my opinion, a necessary first step on the road toward a stronger educational system. It stands there as a symbol of what we are trying to do. We cannot do everything, but we can guarantee parents and taxpayers that all students who graduate from Conval can do something.